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Secession in N.C.

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laws and in the imposition of duties the authority of Congress was not involved, but these ordinarily sovereign prerogatives were exercised solely with regard to the interests of Maryland. In Maryland, therefore, before the ratification of the Articles of Confederation the sovereignty which the British Crown had possessed reverted to the state government. In this particular state, Congress assumed such power only with the express approval of the legislative authority. This conclusion agrees with the doctrine advanced by the advocates of state sovereignty.

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#### SECESSION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

BY H. M. WAGSTAFF.

No adequate account of the secession movement in North Carolina has hitherto appeared. The information for this study is found, for the most part, in the newspapers of the time, in the manuscript letter-books of the governors, the manuscript files of the State Council, the letters of Vance and others, published addresses of T. L. Clingman, the printed journals of the assembly, and convention journals. Personal evidence of men now living who were prominent during the period has also greatly aided the inquiry. New light has been thrown upon the period and the results may be summarized as follows :

With the overthrow of the national whig party just after the Compromise Measures of 1850, were enacted into law, North Carolina passed from a whig régime of fifteen years' duration and became democratic in both her national and state politics. Slavery agitation incident to the compromise was influential in her return to particularism, but the immediate cause of democratic ascendancy was the blow dealt to whig solidarity by a suffrage reform movement of the democrats begun in 1848. Eastern whigs were favorable to the measure while western whigs desired a more sweeping reform involving the change from the federal to a white basis of representation in the General Assembly.

The whigs thus divided, the democrats elected David Settle

P 11408

Reid as governor in 1858. Reid was a strict constructionist of the radical school. For several years, however, the assembly, though democratic, refused to sanction a truculent attitude toward congressional legislation on slavery.

With the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854, disintegration of the state whig party was complete. The "know-nothing" party served as a temporary shelter for the whigs until the Kansas-Nebraska Act had completed the sectionalization of the democrats.

Actuated by a fear of the danger of particularism to the Union, the people of North Carolina began a return in 1858 to the conservative principles which had been abandoned during the excitement of the Kansas struggle. This movement rapidly developed strength and continued its course despite the agitation renewed afresh by John Brown's raid and the stubborn speaker-ship contest in congress. The electoral vote of the state went to Breckenridge, democrat, rather than to Bell, unionist, because the people believed Bell had no chance of election and that Breckenridge's success would furnish the only guarantee of the cotton states remaining in the Union.

Breckenridge's defeat and the subsequent secession of the cotton states divided the people into union and disunion parties. Two theories of the federal constitution were held in the state. (1) The national theory had the adherence of a large portion of the old whigs and their best known leaders. (2) The compact theory was held by the whole body of democrats and a few whigs. Among the democrats, however, were two factions. One faction demanded immediate secession; the other opposed secession until the rights of the South should be more specifically attacked. This conservative faction acted with the national theory whigs and made up a majority which held the state quiescent and awaiting further development in the national situation.

Despite the formation of the confederate government by the lower southern states, the people of North Carolina voted down a convention to consider secession and the unionists remained dominant until the attack on Fort Sumter. With Lincoln's call



for troops the conservative democrats joined the original secession faction and made a majority for secession. The national theory men were now also prepared to withdraw from the Union, but preferred to do so under the form of revolution. A second convention was called without its reference to the people. This convention met May 20, and was found to contain secessionists and revolutionists respectively in the ratio of two to one. After the test vote the ordinance of secession was passed unanimously. Secession had become an accomplished fact, but only after every effort to remain with honor in the Union had failed.

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#### PARTIES IN THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION IN 1861.

BY D. S. FREEMAN.

This investigation is based upon the printed journals ; contemporary periodicals and pamphlets ; the manuscript Archives of Virginia ; personal interviews with surviving members of the convention ; and manuscript memoirs from many sections of the state. The presence of three different parties in the state when the members of the convention were elected led to the formation of three parties in that body, which did not follow the regular national party lines. The secessionists as their name implies advocated separation from the union with various provisos ; the Unionists were for remaining in the Union at any cost, while the third division, or middle men, were convinced that the proper policy was to remain in the Union as long "as is consistent with the honor of the state." It was the final union of the secessionists and middle men on the question of opposition to coercion which brought about secession.

A like number of questions had to be decided by the convention : should the Peace Conference compromise be accepted ; should any plans for border conference or confederacy be accepted ; and should the state permit coercion of the seceded states ? In considering these questions in order, three more or less distinct periods are discernible in the convention. Until the report of

the Peace Conference was made public, many had believed that some settlement was possible. A desire to await the outcome of this body certainly acted as a deterrent on the convention. Even the secessionists were willing for the most part to defer action until the result of the conference was known. With the return of the commissioners and the declaration of a number of them that the conference result was a "hollow sham," this hope was virtually swept away, and, though the Peace Conference proposals were not formally rejected until March 25, they were but little considered after Congress declined to take them up. Following close upon the inauguration of Lincoln came the report of the Committee on Federal Relations appointed during the earliest days of the convention. The report was timed to alleviate the uneasiness occasioned by Lincoln's inaugural, but as it was the result of endless compromises and gave rise to several minority reports, it was attacked from all sides. For the most part the middle men and some of the Unionists favored this report, but it was opposed vigorously by the extremists of both sides. Much amended, and attacked at every step, it was passed section by section until the change of front of some of the middle men introduced the third period. This change was due to a dissatisfaction with the delay of the convention, a dissatisfaction largely strengthened by the sentiment of a great part of the state, and secondly, by the growing predominance of the issue of coercion. On April 6, W. B. Preston, an erstwhile strong Unionist, proposed that a committee wait on President Lincoln to see if he still was firm on the question of coercion. The Union party exhausted every effort in attempting to defeat this measure, but supported by many middle men as well as secessionists its passage followed two days later. With this event, and both secessionists and middle men united against coercion, the outcome was logical. On the 12th came the news of the attack on Sumter, three days later the committee to wait on the President reported, and secession followed on the 17th. It will be observed that during the first period, with maintenance of the union the chief issue, the Union party was naturally the leader, aided by the support of the middle men ; during the second period with border state conference and

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